

COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING AND DEAF/BLIND

MEETING MINUTES December 10th, 2014

10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

1 West Wilson Street, Madison WI

BOARD:

Chair – Justin Vollmar	Co-Chair – Denise Johnson	Secretary – Nicole Everson
Dr. Karl Nollenberger	Tracy Haas	Steve Smart
	Vacant	Vacant

EX-OFFICIO:

Billy Mauldin	Alex Slappey	
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ODHH STAFF MEMBERS:

Dan Miliken	Amber Mullet	Melani Kaplan	Bette Mentz-Powell
Carly	Meta Cucinotta	Chantel Young	Shawnee Thomas
Caroline Ludka	Jennifer Koehn	Nancy Harbison	

PRESENT: Steve Smart, Nicole Everson, Tracy Haas, Caroline Ludka, Justin Vollmar, Tom O'Connor, Dr. Karl Nollenberger, Denise Johnson, Amber Mullet, Dan Miliken, Jeff Holub, Sarah Emmerson, Mallory, Maria, Shantel, Denise, Carly, Meta, Carolyn,

CAPTIONIST: Rosie Coulthart

INTERPRETERS: Nicole and Justine

ABSENT: Billy Mauldin and Alex Slappey,

INTRODUCTIONS: We all introduced ourselves

SEPTEMBER MINUTES DISCUSSION: Minutes look good, any way to condense the minutes? The minutes are in order of agenda. There are times when there will be duplications. Make sure to spell out the acronyms the first time.

APPROVE: Dr. Karl Motions, Tracy Haas Second. All in favor, motion PASSED.

GOVERNOR MEETING DISCUSSION: Justin Vollmar is meeting with Governor Scott Walker's office on budget. We need to decide as a council what our budget needs are and how much of an increase is needed. The office will take the information Justin provides and decide whether or not to increase the ODHH budget. After a long discussion, we agreed on certain needs to be presented.

- Service fund increase to help support more interpreter needs and other services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind. (Funds have not increased in over 10 years. The cost of services have increased. There is a greater need for interpreters and other services.)
- Deaf/Blind need more now than ever due to an increase of services and population affected.
- Creating a Deaf Commission for the State of Wisconsin. (Centralized approach, direct services all under one organization and increase of staff. Many other states have a commission and have a higher success rate in accommodating services, we are behind the times.)
- A high need for mental health budget.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- ODHH (Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) budget is under the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources which is under the Division of Long Term Care and ODHH shares with General Program renewal funds 701 which is a very large umbrella that ODHH is under. The budget goes according to program priorities. Because of all the entities under the umbrella, there is no clear budget strictly for ODHH as they get funding from different departments within DHS (Department of Human Services). The budget is authorized by the legislation.
- Amber to explain how budget is allocated. The budget is determined by the administrative rules. When the budget was approved in 96' and has been the same since, so have the rules. The rules determine priority on the budget, where it's allocated and how it's spent. The Admin rules also follow ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) rules. If a company is mandated by ADA to pay for accommodations, then ODHH does not pay for them. There are exceptions when it comes to undo hardship.
- Communication Card Update: The communication has gone through all the proper channels and has been approved. ODHH will have copies on hand for each office to disburse to our consumers. We will also be sharing at workshops, conferences and more. There is no need for the council to have them printed at the moment. The communication card will be available for print on the website as soon as the website is ready for the new launch date. We will see how the feedback of the communication card it received and go from there. Justin has created a vlog that will also go on the website as soon as it can. ODHH to follow up with the Police force as to how to move forward with the communication card for the officers.

LUNCH

- We have two positions open for the council board.
- Caroline Ludka introduced herself. Hired for the SouthEast region of Wisconsin. Working on outreach with the community. She will be presenting/speaking at different organizations about ODHH and issues that arise. Working on ADA issues in the area as well.
- In comparison to our ODHH budget and office; Minnesota's Deaf and Hard of Hearing office has \$750,000 solely towards the Mental Health aspect. 1,000,000 for the Deaf/Blind department and much more. Their staff is over 50 people. Minnesota also has a smaller population to serve than Wisconsin. How do we catch up to the magnitude Minnesota has reached for their Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind residents.
- ODHH newsletter is now called Connections. The newsletter will be electronic and will be distributed every quarter. It will focus on state issues, office updates, projects that are current and completed. The newsletter will be more relevant to the office. Month to month information will be distributed via email.
- Dan has been meeting with different area ADRC's (Aging and Disability Resource Center), Human Services departments, Social Services and any other state/county agencies to explain what ODHH is. Most offices have never heard of ODHH, this is a concern that needs to be addressed. Dan will continue to meet with different agencies and collaborate with them. Creating a good network.

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- Melani to update: Melani has worked on and submitted the disaster preparedness plan. She continues to partner and work with WAD. Still working on the Mental Steering Committee. Lastly, working hard on rolling out the new ODHH website.
- Deaf/Blind Initiative: Carrie Moelke and Dan met to go over any plans for Deaf/Blind population. There is plans for a Deaf/Blind summit to take place in spring. This summit is focused on bringing awareness to Wisconsin and services to Wisconsin. WDBTAP will be involved with this project as well. (WDBTAP – Wisconsin Deaf Blind Technical Assistance Project)
- Mental Health and substance abuse committee has run out of funds to keep this initiative going.
 - Dan met with Brian Schoup to figure out how we can do indirect or direct funding for mental health. How can we create, set up, and/or develop channels to fund these services.

NEW BUSINESS:

DVR TASKFORCE: Dan met with the DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) taskforce to introduce himself and the office. The administrator of DVR, John Hough, acknowledged ODHH's and WAD's (Wisconsin Association for the Deaf) concerns about consumers issues with DVR. John explained he was not aware of any issues going on because there are no recorded complaints. It was a nice meeting between Dan and John, hope to collaborate more to continue a networking relationship between the two entities.

DISCUSSION: Many consumers are not aware of how to place a grievance with CAP. Is the process broke and therefore DVR is not aware of any concerns because they are not being reported properly. What is the next step for the council? Can John come to one of our council meetings to explain the process? John Hough is the Director for the Bureau of Consumer Services in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the DWD (Department of Workforce Development). Do we need to get Michael Greco, JoAnne Richard and Edith Glenn involved.

ACTION: The DVR taskforce needs to come up with some concrete complaints/concerns to present and share with the correct people at DVR. Get into some details with different consumers of issues going on that we can present John Hough and others that can assist us. WAD's conference in June is a good time to get interviews from consumers. Also try HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America).

MOTION: Invite John to our fall meeting and have concrete evidence to share with him. Motion by Nicole, Second by Steve. All in favor, motion passed.

BYLAWS DISCUSSION: Denise requesting we table the discussion of bylaws until Justin is back from his meeting.

INTERPRETER AVAILABILITY IN THE NORTHERN REGION and INTERPRETER ISSUES: An ongoing issue is that there is not enough interpreters in the Northern region (Wausau to Eau Claire area.) Shawnee Thomas has been getting numerous phone calls of complaints from deaf/hard of hearing consumers. Some interpreters volunteer, but are not certified or have the ability to sign for doctors. Otherwise family members or random people who know sign are helping the community. This causes a conflict, confidentiality problems, code of ethics and more. There is a need for qualified interpreters in the area. There is a strong need for support, leadership, resources, and assistance in the Eau Claire, Superior and Wausau area. Shawnee Thomas is in need of help. Independent Living Center's are there for support

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and resources. People can also express concerns to them. It doesn't seem like ILC has resources or units of support for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf/Blind community. WAD would like to revisit the licensure laws for interpreters. The Deaf community is depressed, traumatized, and oppressed in these regions because of the lack of support. They don't feel they have a voice or have any confidence to stand up for themselves. In Wausau there are interpreters violating the licensure laws. Wausau is limited for services available. DSPS needs to be contacted more often of the problems these areas face. The complaints seem to be disregarded because nothing has been done in any of these areas even when complaints are made. There is no one to oversee, supervise and enforce these interpreters. Because we don't know how to proceed with this issue, we should table until the next meeting.

MOTION: Justin motioned to table, Steve seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

CHAIR REPORT AND UPDATE: Justin presented our request with Scott Walkers office. The response was positive and receptive. The office asked Justin a lot of questions which felt like a positive thing because they showed concern and interest.

ACTION: Follow up with a thank you letter and recap to Scott Walkers office for allowing our council to present our concerns and needs. Justin to do.

DISCUSSION ON FOLLOW-UP of COUNCIL ISSUES: We all agree we have a lot on our plates and want to make sure we are following up with all the issues/projects that arise at our meetings. We all put in some effort, but having a sub-committee that helps get a stronger relationship with our political figures, other agencies and anyone involved with our consumers.

ACTION: Council should create a sub-committee that would work on increasing funds, request for more support and education to political avenues. Committee should be called Policy Advocacy Committee to represent interest on behalf of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind.

MOTION: Justin Motioned, Nicole Seconded. All in Favor, motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION DVR TASKFORCE and LETTER UPDATE To VINCENT AND JOHN: Justin still needs to work on the follow-up letter to Vincent and John Hough.

BYLAWS: Justin would like to move to drop this issue all together at the moment. It was discussed that at the moment there is representation from all ends. Bylaw discussion and topic is closed.

SHAREPOINT DISCUSSION: Melani sent all council members a sharepoint invitation via email. We can build and share things internally for all council members to see. This can be a central location to have our bylaws, files, documents, notes; but we are able to pull them edit and save back in that spot. This is more for our council to work on before final results are shared with the public. Must follow the process to join council sharepoint. Melani is willing to assist anyone that needs help with this.

ACTION: Melani to invite all again via email. Council members to join.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

AmyRose Aker just moved back to Wisconsin after living in Illinois for 20 years. Hearing a lot of negative feedback from outside community about ODHHS and their role as services for the Deaf community. She would like to see more collaboration with the community. She sees a lot of issues that were brought up

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today that was taken care of 20 some years ago and seems like we are back to square one. Would like to see more transparency with the ODHH office. Would like to see a repaired relationship with WAD. I want answers. I want to know what ODHH and the Council is going to do to make changes. (Two of our council members are members of WAD.)

Jeff Holub: When OHI was under DVR, there seemed to be a lot more networking and collaboration. So things have definitely changed over the years and not for the better. I served on a deaf commission for a long time and it was powerful. Over the years the commission had a strong relationship with the Governor, unemployment rate with the deaf and hard of hearing community lowered, there were long term goals being met. Now we can't even get short-term goals completed. I would like to see a 1-2 year mentoring program. We need to work harder on the interpreter relationship, support, education and regulations in our state. Work with Small Development Commission to encourage our consumers to start their own businesses. We need to get more of our resources involved, lets wake up everyone from our consumers and our agencies.

Tom: Treasurer for the state HLAA chapter. I am getting ready to retire and want to make sure we have a good relationship between HLAA and ODHH. HLAA mission statement is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. WE have goals and one of our goals is partnering up with ODHH. Also to work on our goals of improving CART services in Wisconsin. T-Coil legislation and loop project is another. Lastly E911 and the communication process with deaf and hard of hearing people. I also applied to be on the council and am waiting to hear more.

MEETING ADJOURN 3:38